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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM: U. S. Mission Berlin

TO : Department of State

Desp. No. 685

March 30, 1959

REF : Berlin tel 827 to Dept of March 27, 1959.

SUBJ: High Altitude Flights in the Air Corridors to Berlin
(Operation Fast Load)

Enclosed is an extract of the March 27, 1959 log maintained by the American Duty Controller at the Berlin Air Safety Center. The entries shown relate to the flights in the South Corridor of an American C-130 aircraft (identified as "Bravo Hotel #1") which on March 27 flew to Berlin at an altitude of 25,000 feet and returned to the Federal Republic at 20,000 feet in implementation of "Operation Fast Load."

For the Assistant Chief of Mission:

DECLASSIFIED
Authority ND 901074
By HR-1139, NARA, Date 5/23/91

William B. Kelly
Acting Chief
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UNITED STATES ELEMENT
BERLIN AIR SAFETY CENTER

27 March 1959

1. Log Opened 0001Z 27 March 59 Captain Arthur L. Morris
Time Date Name of Controller
2. First Relief 0730Z 27 March 59 Captain William T. Capers III
Time Date Name of Controller
3. Second Relief 1730Z 27 March 59 Captain Vincent E. Johnson
Time Date Name of Controller
4. Soviets on Duty Capt. Kotenko (1) Major Onoprienko
Capt Filin (1) Lt. Shustiski
British on Duty Hewitt (1) Deffee (2)
Royal (3)
French on Duty Ruffie Rogliano

5. Report of Unusual events.

Time:

* * * * *

- 0900Z Approx. Major Lambertson arrived BASC. American Duty Controller briefed on BRAVO HOTEL #1. WC
- 1254Z Received flight plan on BRAVO HOTEL #1 from flight service. WC
- 1301Z British Controller, Royal, briefed by U. S. Chief Controller. WC
- 1305Z French Controller, Rogliano, briefed by U. S. Chief Controller. WC
- 1307Z Flight plan on BRAVO HOTEL #1 passed to Soviet Controller, Onoprienko. He asked U.S. Controller what type aircraft a C-130 was. Advised it was four engine military transport. After about one minute Onoprienko called by telephone for Soviet Interpreter, Shustiski.
- 1309Z Lt. Shustiski entered Operations room. He then asked the U.S. Controller "What is the altitude 2,500 feet?" The U.S. Controller replied "No 25,000 feet." The Soviet Interpreter conferred for a minute with the Controller and then stated, "No guarantee of safety." The U.S. Controller then replied, "We are informing you that this is an American aircraft, it will be flying at 25,000 feet on a QNH altimeter setting and the United States Government will hold your government responsible for the safety of this aircraft. This information is for separation purposes only." Lt. Shustiski made immediate call to Karlshorst. WC

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- 1313Z Flight plan on BRAVO HOTEL #1 returned without Soviet initial. WC
- 1316Z Lt. Shustiski asked what type of aircraft a C-130 was. "Is it a jet since it is coming from Frankfurt in 47 minutes?" He was advised it was a turboprop.
- 1355Z The Soviet Interpreter, Shustiski, stated to the U. S. Chief Controller. The Soviet Chief Controller advises we will not guarantee safety of flight to this aircraft. It is entirely your responsibility if this aircraft proceeds at this altitude. We don't say he can't come but we cannot and will not guarantee his safety. We resent this "ultimatum." In 14 years of operation we have never had this happen before. There is no written agreement but practice has set the procedure and we protest this deviation and ultimatum. Lt. Shustiski then passed some remarks identifying them as his own feelings. Essentially he said you are now flying through "our territory" where we fly. Why do you do this when our guarantee has always been true? U. S. Chief Controller replied that the U. S. has never recognized any altitude restriction in the corridor and the altitudes we fly are governed by operational requirements. Due to new equipment we must now fly higher and that was why we have given the Soviets prior notice that our aircraft would be operating at this altitude.
- 1402Z Captain Penney called from Flight Service for Mr. Biron (at COG). Did we get a reaction? Yes. Any threats? No.
- 1408Z Lt. Shustiski relayed statement from Colonel Stromov to U. S. Chief Controller. Soviets cannot guarantee safety of flight for this aircraft at this altitude. Responsibility rests on the U. S. If changes in procedures are necessary they should be worked out in advance. They (Soviets) cannot change procedures established for many years overnight. If we (U.S.) change ours without first informing them we must be responsible for any accidents.
- 1414Z Lt. Shustiski requested that the U.S. Controller pass to the U.S. Chief Controller that the Soviets cannot guarantee safety of flight and furthermore object to the flight. (The reason for the repeat was to include the word "object")
- 1418Z U.S. Chief Controller advised Colonel McCaskill that the Soviets will not guarantee safety and object to the flight. Colonel McCaskill asked, "Any threats?" "No." "Think they will do anything?" "No."
- 1420Z American Controller called Flight Service for departure of AF 50011. Lt. Shustiski also asked for the departure at this time. Flight Service said aircraft had not landed at Rhein Main yet. ETA 1400Z. This was not passed to Soviets. They were only told no departure was available.
- 1425Z American Controller called Berlin ATC about AF 50011. They had no news. Also no flight plan. Gave flight plan to "MG" (Captain Gardner).

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- 1427Z Lt. Shustiski asked difference in air speeds of C-47 and C-54. He was told approximately 40 kts. He then asked why it took a C-54 2+45 to come to Berlin from Frankfurt and a C-47 4+45? U.S. Controller said it probably depended on the route.
- 1430Z Lt. Shustiski asked again for departure of AF 50011. He was told we would pass it as soon as possible.
- 1435Z Departure for AF 50011 received. Descent to 8,000 was also passed at this time. No initials from Soviets.
- 1436Z Berlin ATC reported pilot of AF 50011 wished to file a violation against an unidentified aircraft flying formation with him. Position was 55 miles southwest Tempelhof. Soviets advised of this and reminded we hold them responsible for safety of our aircraft. Lt. Shustiski asked what altitude our aircraft was flying. He was told it was descending to 8,000 from 25,000. He wanted to know the exact altitude. The American Controller asked him "At what time?" He then stated he wanted to know what altitude the aircraft entered the corridor. The U.S. Controller checked and replied 25,000. Lt. Shustiski then asked the reason for the delay in receiving the departure time. The U.S. Controller checked with Flight Service and replied "There was a delay at Rhein Main." The Soviet Controller didn't like the answer, but made no further comment. (Aircraft did not land Rhein Main)
- 1445Z Lt. Shustiski informed the U.S. Chief Controller that the Soviet Chief Controller states the Soviets "Categorically Protest" this flight at such an altitude. Furthermore when our aircraft joined your aircraft your aircraft was at 8,000 meters.
- 1446Z Berlin ATC reported foreign language interference on 121.5. This was passed to Soviet Interpreter who stated "I've already told my people once." "Can you identify the language as Russian?" This was said with a big grin. The American Controller rechecked with Berlin ATC. They could not identify language.
- 1451Z C-130 sighted over ACA building with "Bogey" at left wing. (very close 10 feet)
- 1453Z U.S. Chief Controller requested Lt. Shustiski to tell Colonel Stromov that the U.S. protests the action of the Soviet fighters in intercepting our aircraft and following it into the Control Zone so closely as to constitute a hazard to our aircraft. Lt. Shustiski asked if we could identify the fighters as Soviet. The U.S. Chief Controller replied that until we had better proof we presumed the aircraft to be Soviet since they were definitely a Soviet type aircraft.
- 1456Z U.S. Chief Controller requested Berlin ATC attempt to identify fighters.

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- 1500Z AF 50011 arrived Tempelhof 1458Z. Passed to Flight Service.
- 1504Z Flight Service advised of Soviet "Bogeys" escorting AF 50011 into Control Zone.
- 1527Z Soviet Interpreter, Shustiski, received a call on telephone. He began speaking English and asking "Who are you? What is your position and profession?" "If you live in Gatow you should speak to the British." He then called Flight Lieutenant Royal, British Controller, to the telephone. From the ensuing conversation it appeared the caller was a German living in Gatow who was trying to get some information. His name sounded like "Gallas or Gallig" (Phonetic spelling). The British Controller stated he couldn't help him and hung up.
- 1630Z American Controller passed outbound flight plan for AF 50011 to Soviets.
- 1632Z The Soviet Interpreter stated, "Same objections." The American Controller then asked, "You will not guarantee safety of flight?" Lt. Shustiski then stated "No Guarantee." American Controller then informed the Soviets, "We are not asking for a guarantee of safety of flight. This flight plan is passed to aid you in providing separation for your aircraft. This is an American aircraft and it will be flying at 20,000 on a QNH altimeter setting. My government holds your government responsible for the safety of this aircraft."
- 1635Z Soviet Interpreter, Shustiski, informed American Controller that the reason for not guaranteeing safety was Soviet flights at this altitude.
- 1637Z Lt. Shustiski asked the American Controller, "Did you state your government will take responsibility for this flight?" American Controller replied "No." Then the American Controller repeated the statement in 1632Z entry.
- 1639Z Soviet Interpreter stated to the American Controller, "Colonel Stromov wishes me to tell you, our answer is that we object to this flight and my government discharges all responsibility for the safety of the aircraft."
- 1646Z Soviet Interpreter stated to American Controller, "20,000 is not vacant either. We cannot guarantee above 10,000."
- 1653Z Lt. Shustiski received a call from Colonel Stromov and then stated, "Colonel Stromov has checked all altitudes above 10,000 and they are full. Therefore we accept no responsibility. The U.S. Chief Controller replied, "We cannot accept this statement."
- 1655Z Hannover RAF radar control called the British Controller, Royal, and stated they had observed our C-130 inbound at 30,000 on their radar. The British Controller stated everything was under control.

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- 1657Z After a discussion with the British Controller (Interpreter), Royal, Lt. Shustiski the Soviet Interpreter requested that the American Controller change the word "Discharges" in the 1639Z entry to "Discard." He then asked the American Controller if 50011 was the number painted on the side of the aircraft. He was told it was.
- 1704Z AF 50011 departed Tempelhof.
- 1713Z The Soviet Interpreter asked the Chief American Controller, "Can you give me the altitude of 50011 now?" Major Lambertson, U. S. Chief Controller, answered, "No, he's climbing out but I can give you his position." After checking with Berlin ATC the Soviet Interpreter was informed that the aircraft was 35 miles southwest of Tempelhof and had not reached cruising altitude.
- 1718Z Berlin ATC advised that AF 50011 now at 20,000 feet. The Chief American Controller informed the Soviet Interpreter, Shustiski, "The Aircraft is at cruising altitude now, 20,000 feet.
- 1736Z Berlin ATC was requested to advise when AF 50011 was out of their range on radar.
- 1741Z Soviets received telephone call. Onoprienko answered. Lasted about 10 seconds.
- 1746Z Berlin ATC informed BASC that AF 50011 was over Mansbach at 1744Z, that at 152 miles out they could pick him up intermittently about every fifth sweep on their radar, that the aircraft had company all the way, that the escort picked him up about twenty miles southwest of Tempelhof.

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